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ABSTRACT

This lecture discusses the changing role of the presidency. It looks at how college presidents came to know for the first time themselves as presidents, the academy, and the purpose of education. The importance of recapturing the spirit that originally brought them into the profession is stressed. Presidents are encouraged to continue to set the standard for leadership in higher education, sharing their vision with the campus and the larger community. In order to win public support and campus approval, today's president must carefully evaluate his or her role as a spokesperson for higher education and as an educator. Presidents should set the tone for their colleges. It is important to create an administrative team that includes the faculty. College presidents must restore the centrality of teaching on all campuses, and combine competence with commitment. The challenge to all college presidents is how to ask the right questions to get at what is the heart and the essence of the academy. (SM)

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The Changing Role of the Presidency: Civility, Cooperation, and Caring

1988 President-to-Presidents Lecture

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The Changing Role of the Presidency: Civility, Cooperation, and Caring, was presented as the 1988 President-to-Presidents Lecture at the 28th Annual Meeting of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU). AASCU is a leading higher education association that represents more than 370 public colleges and universities across the United States, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands.

The Changing Role of the Presidency: Civility, Cooperation, and Caring

I wouldn't want to start any other way than by telling you a story I recounted during the AASCU mission to Australia. Two young royal Englishmen, the Duke of York and the Prince of Wales, grew weary with palace life one snowy afternoon and went into the streets to throw snowballs at passers by. They picked up a little street urchin along the way, and together they went merrily along, toppling off the hats of every passerby they saw. Finally, one victim grew angry, grabbed the boys, and took them to the magistrate. The magistrate called the first young man forward and asked, "What's your name?" The young man boldly said, "I'm the Duke of York," and the magistrate shook his head and said, "A likely story." He called the next one forward and again asked, "What's your name?" The second young many boldly said, "I'm the Prince of Wales." "Another likely story," said the magistrate. And then he called the young street urchin forward and asked him his name. Looking around amazed, the lad wiped his nose on his sleeve and said, "I stand by me buddies; I'm the Archbishop of Canterbury."

And tonight I, too, stand by me buddies. To be asked to give the President-to-Presidents Lecture is to me the ultimate compliment and the most appropriate way I know to stand by me buddies. Anytime you see a turtle on a post, you know it didn't get there by itself. And I know that I didn't get here by myself, either. When I look around here tonight at me buddies, I'm reminded of the joys I've experienced as a member of the AASCU Board of Directors, working with Steve Horn, Hoke Smith, Alice Chandler, and so many others of you. I'm looking forward to working with Barney Coulter, and I'm sorry I missed the opportunity to work with Nat Sicuro.

AASCU has always been much more than just an organization of American colleges and universities; it is truly a family—and I'm equally flattered and honored not only to be a member of the family but also to have the opportunity to deliver this important address. I remember with special fondness the AASCU summer institutes—especially working together as a family as we all grew and matured as college presidents. How fortunate we have been to have had Steve Cheshier and Fred Taylor to direct these outstanding summer institutes.

I also remember our education missions, especially those overseas, that allowed us to make many new buddies in international higher education. And then I've had the privilege to work on many AASCU committees, as each of you has, taking advantage of yet another opportunity to work closely with me buddies. And don't we all gladly and proudly stand by our buddy, Allan Ostar. As president of AASCU, Allan has always served with distinction, skill, and dedication. As energetic advocates of higher education, Allan and all of us gathered here form a band of long marchers—gloriously democratic, gloriously egalitarian, and gloriously committed to our students, to our faculties, and to the communities we serve.

In this spirit of good will and shared vision, I'm going to talk happily to you. I was coming back from France, from AASCU's French mission as a matter of fact, and seated next to me on the plane was an American doctor. I asked him what he'd been doing abroad and he said, "It's very interesting; I've been studying surgery in Sweden. You see, the Swedish doctors do something that American doctors don't do. They talk happily over their patients while they operate on them. And when those patients go into postoperative recovery, they do better than those patients who are not talked happily over." So I thought I'd talk happily over you tonight, and when you awaken, you're going to feel better.

It is a good time to be talking happily over one another. Certainly I know we presidents often feel beleaguered by dwindling resources, aging buildings, declining enrollments, hostile legislators, recalcitrant boards, discontented faculty—the list goes on and on. Lamar Alexander recently said that critics of education are like sharpshooters who come down from their safe perches in the mountains after the battle and shoot all the survivors. We often feel shot at, do we not? And we sometimes labor with our daily concerns and say along with J. Alfred Prufrock, as we, too, measure out our lives with coffee spoons, "I grow old, I grow old!"—even wondering, "Do I dare to eat a peach."

How many of you have reached the place where you know you are no longer young? I'm doing a study of that. A man told me one day, "I know I'm no longer young when I go to take a shower and the fog mists over the mirror and I'm glad." And a woman told me this one: "I know I'm no longer young when I look at my hands and I see my mother's hands." Some of us have reached that place in our presidencies when we no longer feel young. And we say with

Peggy Lee, "Is that all there is?" How many of you have asked that recently? And then you add the cult of efficiency that seems to be everywhere in our country today, and we long for the business CEO's golden parachute. In Australia they call it the golden handshake. Or we long even for a poison pill and a hostile take-over.

But when we look back over our careers, we invariably remember our educational Camelots. One of our fellow presidents says that faculty remember a time that never was and don't want it to change. Isn't this what we as presidents do as well? We think in terms of a glorious past in which all the colleges looked like Cambridge in Chariots *of Fire,* where fresh-faced young men, never women, put on their mortarboards and took thoughtful strolls across the campus. Remember those venerable old buildings, with ivy clinging to every wall and all the professors looking like Ronald Coleman?

But now it is not the same. Now we have book after book detailing the problems of the presidency. We have James Fisher in *Power of the Presidency* warning us that we have to think, talk, and even walk like a president. Fisher even insists that we must never even admit we are tired, except to our secretary, our assistant, and our spouse—and sometimes, of course, to our buddies in AASCU, who invariably find a way to renew our spirits.

Clark Kerr has defined the university president as "one who is expected to be a friend of the students and a colleague of the faculty, a good fellow with the alumni, a sound administrator with the trustees, a good speaker with the public, an astute bargainer with foundations and federal agencies, a friend of industry, labor and agriculture, a persuasive diplomat with donors, a spokesman to the press, a champion of education generally, a supporter of the professions, a scholar in his or her own right, a public servant at the state and national levels, a devotee of opera and football equally, a decent human being, a good spouse and parent, and an active member of the church. Above all, he or she must enjoy traveling in airplanes, eating meals in public, and attending ceremonies." Then he concludes by saying that "no one can be all these things, and some succeed at being none."

Given the daily pressures we all face, perhaps we need to be reminded of Nellie Forbush in South *Pacific,* a cockeyed optimist, who continued to dream the stuff of dreams. My favorite

author in the world is Eudora Welty. Her marvelous short story "First Love" begins with these words: "Whatever happened, it happened in extraordinary times. In a season of dreams, and in Natchez it was the bitterest winter of them all. The north wind struck in 1807 with an instant penetration, as if it followed the settlers down by their own course, screaming down the river banks to drive them further still. Afterwards there was the strange drugged fall of snow."

We recognize similarities, do we not, in that winter of 1807, and in the winter of our own discontent? But Welty continues: "When the sun rose the air broke into a thousand prisms as close as the flash-and-turn of gulls' wings. For a long time afterwards it was so clear that in the evening the little companion-star to Sirius could be seen plainly in the heavens by travelers who took their way by night, and Venus shone in the daytime in all its course through the new transparency of the sky."

So we can say along with Albert Camus, that in the winter of our discontent, if we listen to Eudora Welty and those settlers who drove further still, that there is a summer, an invincible summer, in all of us.

As I talk to you tonight, I'd like to take as my theme T. S. Eliot's assertion that "We shall not cease from exploration/ And the end of all our exploring/ Will be to arrive where we started/ And know the place for the first time." Every president fortunate enough to have been chosen to deliver this annual lecture has sounded a common theme. But as Andre Gide so eloquently reminds us, though almost everything we can say has already been said, since no one was listening, it has to be said all over again.

Robert Browning's "Fra Lippo Lippi" offers the following tribute to painting:

> For don't you mark? We're made so that we love
> First when we see them painted, things we have passed
> Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see;
> And so they are better painted—better to us,
> Which is the same thing. Art was given for that;
> God uses us to help each other so,
> Lending our minds out.

Isn't it marvelous that we have an organization like AASCU that gives us this and numerous other opportunities to help each other

and to lend our minds out? Though I'm certainly no artist, tonight I'm going to paint in broad strokes, and I hope my talk allows us all to see the role of college presidents in a clearer light.

So I invite you now to return with me to rediscover those desires and needs that brought you into our wonderful profession in the first place. I want to focus on four different themes: how we came to know ourselves as presidents for the first time, how we came to know the academy for the first time, how we came to know the purpose of education for the first time, and how we came to know ourselves for the first time.

I invite you all to read your inaugural address again. Do you remember the freshness? Do you remember the excitement with which you prepared your remarks? Things are different today, aren't they? Now we all walk around with a sign saying, "Have you hugged your president today?" But it is important to recapture that spirit that brought you into the profession in the first place.

When I became president of Kennesaw State College, I read all the books I could find on what it meant to be a good leader. I read a book called *Power!* I read another one called *Success.* I read *The Art of Deception* (that was an interesting one) and an article called "The Art of Intimidation." The common theme of all of these books is "I win; you lose!" And then I read a book called *The Gamesman.* To become a "gamesman" I had to put on a pith helmet and a safari suit and walk into the jungle to wrestle the animals to their knees—again, "I win; you lose!" And then I read a book called (I think this was a particularly interesting one) *Dress for Success.* I bought a blue blazer, a khaki skirt, a Rolex watch, a Cross pen, a burgundy brief case, and closed pumps. Walking into Atlanta Airport in my new power suit, I held my head extra high until I saw everybody else was dressed exactly the same way. How many of you have that wardrobe? And I recently read an article called "Eat for Success." No more wimpy lunches. Go for the raw steak, the raw onions. Nobody will sit next to you, but you will be powerful. We feed on foolery, don't we?

It is not surprising that one of the most powerful books in the annals of business history is entitled *In Search of Excellence.* A major thesis of this book is that it is not what you know that makes a difference but what you believe about people that makes the difference. A skill we as presidents have all worked hard to master is the ability to recognize and affirm the contributions made by those around us. We all strive to be effective managers

of people, to invite others to see themselves as able, valuable, and responsible.

We as college presidents must continue to set the standard for leadership in higher education. And our message as leaders must go beyond the powerful, erudite, articulate words of our inauguration speeches; we must echo Warren Bennis's assertion that true leaders enroll others in their vision. "To enroll"—don't you love that term? In academe it means that people sign up for a particular course. In broader terms though if you enroll in something it means you share someone else's vision.

It is this broader definition that brings me to the importance of a president sharing his or her vision not only with the campus but with the larger community. On the importance of public relations, Father Theodore Hesburgh of Notre Dame says that "anyone who isn't heard outside the campus isn't worth being heard inside." Clark Kerr agrees and asserts that "the greatest change in governance now is not the rise of student power or faculty power but the rise of public power. The governance of higher education is less and less by higher education.... The ivory tower of yore is now becoming a regulated public utility."

In order to win public support and campus approval, today's president must carefully evaluate his or her role not just as a spokesperson for higher education but also as an educator. Emerson says that "an institution is the lengthened shadow of one person." At institutions of higher education this shadow has been traditionally cast by the college president. Today's president is generally expected to be all things to all people. An editorial from the *Chronicle of Higher Education* said it best: "A president is supposed to do everything superbly and, if not walk on water, at least know where the rocks are."

But first and foremost, today's president must be an educator who sets the tone for his or her college. In his marvelous book *Academic Strategy,* George Keller maintains that "there is nothing so important for American higher education now as the reemergence of thoughtful educators, of academic executives who are farsighted statesmen and not just card-carrying members of the firemen's union." We therefore have to perfect our roles as teachers. And if teaching is a facilitation of learning, then administration must be the facilitation of teaching. No other presidential role—not fund raising, not building buildings, not legislating faculty disputes—is as important as teaching. And yet Clark Kerr

tells us that only 20 percent of us are involved in academic matters.

But the president's shadow cannot be an all-engulfing force. The president must create an administrative team that includes the faculty. James L. Fisher reminds us that though "faculty members are frustrating, fretful, cynical, and critical," they are "also supportive, brilliant, and even magnificent. Only they can transform the president's vision into reality."

And all great teachers, as each of you knows, must do two things: give the student an understanding of the subject and at the same time give the student the confidence to use that understanding. We as presidents must play our educating role by making certain that our colleges and universities are lined with classrooms filled with a diversity of students learning what they need for their specialties and are ensuring that the quality of all facets of their life is enhanced. As teachers we must be more than anything else a manager of people; we must use our people knowledge to galvanize, to coordinate, to lead, to manage, to synchronize, to energize, and to focus.

I recently had the privilege of speaking at the first college I ever attended—Cumberland College in Kentucky. This small college has made a profound difference in the lives of thousands and thousands of mountain children, including me. Like Loretta Lynn, I'm a coal-miner's daughter. I like to tell everybody that she's got all the money and I've got all the education. That's not true, though, because Cumberland College has given many proud Kentuckians an outstanding education.

When I was a young and eager student there, I came under the influence of a marvelous president. During the recent celebration of the college's 100th anniversary, I was chosen to represent the alumni and to speak to 3,000 students. The president I had revered so much had been there 35 years, and I wanted to pay tribute to him, because to me, Dr. Boswell was Cumberland College. Whenever I think I'm a pretty good president, I think I'm like him. And whenever I need to be reminded sharply that there's a better way, I know it's the Boswell way.

My remarks that day were extra special because President Boswell had become extremely ill. Speaking from the heart, I reminded the audience that some people come into our lives and quickly go, while others, like Dr. Boswell, linger for a while and leave footprints on our hearts, and we are never, ever the same.

Following that morning's convocation, we were all gathered in the student center when the current president of the college came running over to my table and said, "Betty, you're the first to know; Dr. Boswell has just died." This great educator died on the 100th anniversary of the college to which he had given his life.

We were all devastated. Though his beautiful wife did not want us to hold a formal memorial service to honor Dr. Boswell, we took it on ourselves to call alumni from far and wide to join us the following afternoon, after the homecoming ball game, for an informal tribute to this great educator. Over 60 people came, and we sat in a large circle and shared our favorite stories about Dr. Boswell. We made a tape of this special "Time of Remembrance" and presented it to Mrs. Boswell, who was always there by his side sharing in his dreams for Cumberland College.

It was so affirming to have the opportunity to honor this man who had been such an important mentor in all of our lives. He was our teacher, our coach, our friend, and our inspiration. If there is one word I can say in conclusion about Dr. Boswell, it is *integrity*. He represents all those glorious virtues that brought each of us into our profession in the first place—not to be a builder of buildings, not to be a recruiter of football stars, but indeed to be an educator.

In his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, William Faulkner said that he believes "that man will not merely endure; he will prevail. He is immortal, not because he alone among creatures has an inexhaustible voice, but because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance." Today's college president must also be "a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance." Like President Boswell, today's president must choose to care about students, about faculty, and about the community served by his or her college. The sacred traditions of academe that brought each of us into the profession to start with and that are so beautifully represented by educators like Dr. Boswell can be maintained, and at the same time realistic objectives, shrewd strategies, and long-term goals can be established and agreed upon by the administrative staff and faculty. We can produce what George Keller calls "new management wine in old academic bottles."

The second subject I want to review is how each of us came to know the academy for the first time. Chaucer's marvelous description of a dedicated academic—"and gladly would he learn

and gladly teach"—is still appropriate today. But a more contemporary celebration of teaching is found in J. D. Salinger's novel *Seymour: An Introduction*. Remember Buddy Glass, the 40-year old protagonist who compares his decision to become a teacher to a religious calling? "I have a 9:00 class," he says. "I know—not always, but I know—there's no single thing I do that is more important than going into that awful Room 307. . . . [The students] may shine with the misinformation of the ages, but they shine. This thought manages to stun me: There's no place I'd rather go right now than into Room 307. Seymour once said that all we do our whole lives long is go from one little piece of holy ground to the next. Is he never wrong?"

Though there is something sacred and holy about the teaching profession, as presidents, we occasionally grow weary with our teachers, don't we? We have all known teachers who are like Groucho Marx—they wouldn't want to join a country club that would have them as members. They are convinced that they're just passing through, that they have come aboard for a quick cup of coffee before they move on to a more prestigious position.

There are so many others, though, that ignite their students and colleagues just by their very passion. Grady Bogue, the Chancellor of Louisiana State University in Shreveport, offers the following tribute to teaching: "Classrooms, laboratories, playing fields, studios, workshops and rehearsal halls—these are sites of precious work. We need to celebrate the nobility of teaching as the most completely constructive force in our nation. Teaching is a journey of the heart, an opportunity to touch a life forever. It is an unselfish investment in the dignity and potential of one's students. The life of the master teacher honors all that is good and noble in mankind."

I'm reminded again of the glorious time I spent at Cumberland College. When I first went away to school as an eager undergraduate, back when the earth was cooling, I was fortunate enough to fall under the spell of a grand teacher who had a profound influence on my life. Professor Evans had already been at the college for decades when I arrived. he had previously taught my mother and had even taught my grandmother in boarding school.

Visiting him just before I graduated from Cumberland College, I said, "Professor Evans, I'm thinking about being a teacher, what do you think?" And he said, "Oh, Betty Faye, I don't

know what it is about teaching that's so good, but if I have to die, and die I must, all I want to do is just teach a great class, return to my office, sit down at my desk, prepare the next day's lecture, and just die right there." I said, "Professor Evans, I don't believe I want to do it exactly that way."

It didn't happen to him that way, either. He became very, very ill toward the end of his life, and President Boswell had to send over two strong athletes every morning to pick up Professor Evans and carry that poor old ailing man packsaddle across the campus. Don't you love the image of somebody enjoying teaching so well that he had to be carried to the classroom, always lecturing as he went?

I paid my last visit to this great teacher just before he died. By this time, he was lying in a hospital bed in his living room. I walked over to that little house by the side of the campus, eased into the living room where he lay wasting away, and looked down on his dying face. When I caught his eye, I said, "Professor Evans, I'm Betty Faye." And to his credit, he lied and said he remembered me.

I continued, "Professor Evans, I've come back to tell you I'm a teacher now—all because of you." He looked at me a long time and finally said, "Betty Faye, let's see if I taught you anything." He used to teach in an old-fashioned way by calling off a quotation from a card in his hand, and you had to answer with the rest of the quotation. When he called off a quotation from some long-ago lecture, I couldn't remember it, and he began to cry. He said, "Oh, Betty Faye, I guess noboby ever remembers a thing I said." Then I managed to say something that seemed to please him. I said, "Professor Evans, forgive me. I don't remember everything you said, but I do remember what you were." He squeezed my hand and nodded, "That ought to be enough."

And yes, that ought to be enough for any teacher. My point is that in our profession there are few people who rise up and call us blessed, but when they do, they are really saying, "You made a difference in my life. You passed my way. You meant something to me." Professor Evans no only exemplified Chaucer's Clerk, but he also created in me a sense of the connectedness between what he knew and what he was. He was dedicated not just to making a living, but to making a life.

Most of us came into the profession wanting to be a Professor Evans. We longed for the satisfaction that good teaching would bring to our lives and to our students' lives. But

something happened along the way, didn't it? Today, the religious calling to teach seems less compelling, somehow. The time and effort now expended in research, committee work, and administrative duties (all attributes of the factory-efficient organization we as presidents have allowed to be created) seem to garner more rewards and recognition than teaching.

Further, some of the joy seems to have gone out of teaching. Teachers today not only face added responsibilities outside the classroom—the pressure to publish, the endless committee work, the many advising and administrative duties—but they also face an unprecedented diversity in their classes. And they seem to grow frustrated much too often with their insecurities and failures to ignite this new breed of learners to feel as passionately as they do (or did) about their subject. One critic of education laments that too many times teachers today have classroom exchanges that become as formalized and as deadly as routine sexual relationships in a long-suffering marriage.

Don't we therefore all have a responsibility as presidents to restore the centrality of teaching on all of our campuses? Research and service are certainly important parts of our profession, but we must first foster and nourish those glorious, passionate, artful, inspiring teachers who are the backbone of our campuses. How do we recruit them? How do we keep them? How do we nurture them? How do we reward them? These are questions we must never stop asking. We must come back again and again to the importance of the centrality of teaching.

Any consideration of the importance of teaching must include a reevaluation of the purpose of education—my third topic here. To what end shall we use our education? I've been caught up as you have with this marvelous, technological world. Any generation that can invent the Rubik's Cube, much less solve it, has got to be a whiz-kid generation. And you know today how fast-paced technology is upon us. We're witnessing technological and scientific revolutions that bring us untold benefits. And yet they cannot solve many of our most enduring problems.

A marvelous study by Arthur Levine, and many of you know it, called *When Dreams and Heroes Died,* points out that the majority of the college students he queried feel that though the ship of society is as doomed as the Titanic, they're going first class and their superior MBAs and their computer expertise will enable them to get on the lifeboat to safety and security—apparently oblivious to the fate of anyone other than themselves.

The competence higher education gives to today's students sometimes makes them amazingly arrogant and equally insensitive to the needs of others. At the close of his monumental study *College: The Undergraduate Experience in America,* Ernest Boyer asserts that "the idealism of the undergraduate experience must reflect itself in loyalties that transcend self. It is too much to expect," asks Boyers, "that even in this hard-edged, competitive age, a college graduate will live with integrity, civility—even compassion?"

Without this element of compassion and integrity, education often becomes the mere acquisition of knowledge. Boyer asserts that "what today's college is teaching most successfully is competence—competence in meeting schedules, in gathering information, in responding well on tests, in mastering the details of a specific field." But competence alone is certainly not enough. Competence must be combined with commitment. The three R's are essential, but so are the three I's—integrity, initiative, innovation. As Alfred North Whitehead once observed, "Your learning is useless to you till you have lost your texts, burnt your lecture notes, and forgotten the minutiae you have learned by heart for the examination." Developing critical thinking skills should not be overshadowed by the information accumulated. Learning something by heart is not the same as learning with the heart. By insisting on the centrality of social responsibility as one of our missions, the university can help create in itself and in the larger society what the contemporary British poet Alan Brownjohn has called "a commonwealth of decency."

An example of the importance of combining competence with commitment occurred recently when a young computer whiz spread a computer virus through over 6,000 of the 60,000 systems in the Department of Defense computer network. This remarkably bright, 23-year-old Cornell graduate student was apparently so unchallenged by normal programming activities that he decided to use his creativity to place a virus in a few computers throughout the United States. However, a careless mistake caused his experiment to go awry, and the virus spread out of control. The point is that he had no constructive goal for his project; he used his knowledge and creativity without any concern for the potential harmful effects. He is certainly competent, but he seems to lack a spirited commitment to something beyond himself.

The fall 1988 issue of *Liberal Education* focuses on the role of philanthropy in higher education. One article maintains that the study of philanthropy should be included in the education of undergraduates. One reason is that such an emphasis on philanthropy would highlight "the ways in which voluntary action for the public good permeates American life. To be a responsible person leading a full and rewarding life, one must become involved in service to others."

Five years ago, *Time* magazine named the computer the Man of the Year. I found this gesture astonishing. Did no person live enough, care enough, give enough to be named the Man of the Year? My choice that year would have been the man in the Potomac helping with the rescure after the crash of the Air Florida jet. Remember that cold day when ice formed on the jet's wings, the plane hit the Potomac Bridge, crashed into the Potomac River, and quickly began to sink. A group of survivors huddled together on the tail of the plane to keep themselves above the chilly waters. Television cameras were on the scene immediately, and they picked up hovering helicopters dropping lifeline flotation rings, reminding us all of the reality of what happens to people when they are most vulnerable. Time and again one brave survivor, without hesitation, caught the flotation ring and gave it to someone else. When the ring finally came down for the last time to rescue the man who had sacrificed himself to save all the others, he was so diminished in energy and so chilled by the icy water that he could not pull himself into the flotation ring. Instead he slid to his death before our very eyes. The TV cameras captured this ordinary man doing an extraordinary thing.

We must somehow instill in our college graduates the same commitment to others exhibited by this heroic man. We must also expand our definition of community to encourage the spirit recently displayed in the efforts to free the whales trapped in the icy waters off the Alaskan coast. This vast international cooperative enterprise epitomizes the importance of sharing our goals and efforts with our global neighbors. And isn't this exactly what the message of this conference has been, reminding us all of the necessity of linkages reaching out beyond us? Mark Van Doren says that connectedness is the business of education. And it's connectedness not just with those who are like us, but also with those who are unlike us.

Again, the topic of this year's meeting is the importance of multicultural education for an increasingly global society. As

college presidents we must maintain a genuine respect for differences. During a speech to the National Press Club last spring, Johnetta Cole, president of Spelman College, said that "we are for allowing difference and expecting difference until difference doesn't make any more difference."

We should also respect the differences not only in our global society but also in our own culture. Despite the recent well-publicized attacks on curriculum reform, we at Kennesaw State College are striving to ensure that the contributions of minorities are given their proper place in our curriculum. I recently published an editorial in *Black Issues in Higher Education* arguing that the writings of Martin Luther King, Jr. should be included in the canon of American Literature. Adding King to this accepted canon may seem like a trivial matter or a symbolic gesture, but it will certainly not go unnoticed by the many minority students who still insist that they feel excluded from the mainstream of academic life and achievement.

We must also reinvest in the importance of undergraduate education. All too often our most distinguished teachers never stand before a class of undergraduate student's. We can no longer accept that many core courses are relegated to graduate assistants or to junior faculty members. Ernest Boyer correctly asserts that "at a college of quality, incoming students should be placed equally high on the president's agenda."

In his essay "The American scholar," Emerson asserts that "colleges . . . have their indispensable office—to teach elements. But they can only highly serve us, when they aim not to drill, but to create; when they gather from every far ray of various genius to their hospitable halls, and, by the concentrated fires, set the hearts of their youth on flame." As presidents we must ensure that our colleges and universities "gather from every far ray of various genius," be it Martin Luther King's speeches, special seminars for college freshmen, or international programs. Our "hospitable halls" must be open and inviting to a wide array of curricular reform, especially that involving international studies.

My fourth and final topic tonight is how we can come to recognize and know our own personal growth for the first time. A recent study in Pennsylvania says that spouses talk to each other an average of four minutes a day and that parents talk to children an average of 30 seconds a day. How many of you have children? Noted child psychologist Neil Postman says that "children are the

living messages you will send to a time you will not see." And I think one of the things I've found in my own life as a president, and I can speak only for me, is that my husband Joel and I, busy, busy with much doing, have come full cycle back again to honor what is truly important in our lives. Some wag said that true happiness comes when all the children go off to college and the dog dies. That's not true. True happiness, I think, comes in little ways, like cat feet.

My son, Michael, and I have had a special relationship all our lives. One day when he was four years old, he came in from play and said, "Mommy, I need some money." When I told him I didn't have any money, he said, "But Mommy, you're rich." Quite startled, I assured him that his father and I were far from rich. He paused, gave me a confident glare, and said, "Yes you are, Mommy; you're rich in boys." Needless to say, he got the money.

Michael and David, our two sons, have taught Joel and me so much. One day David came in from play and asked me to take him to the mall. I said, "I will, honey, if you'll get me your sweater." And he said, "Mommy, I'm not David honey; I'm David darling. Michael is Michael honey." As parents, teachers, presidents, and in any other leadership role we assume, we send out messages that define our relationship with those who surround us. It is therefore essential as presidents that we remain intentionally inviting with all of our colleagues, that we create a team spirit in which each faculty and staff member understands and fulfills the important role he or she plays in the overall success of the college.

We must also never lose sight of those things in life that truly matter. During January a couple of years ago, my son Michael and I were involved in a bad car wreck. Michael was just getting ready to go back to Wake Forest, and we were going to stop by the bank to get him some money. It was one of those rare winter days in Georgia, a gorgeous day. As we rode along, I said, "Michael, are you wearing your seat belt?" He said, "No, I'm too tall; I don't like to wear it." I said, "You need to wear it. Start wearing your seat belt." We entered the intersection and I said to him, "Michael, this is the most dangerous intersection in our county." He said, "You are right, Mom; I can't see around the cars." We entered the intersection, and within 10 seconds we were hit broadside by a truck. We were both knocked out. Our new car was totaled. I've never known an old car to be totaled, only a new car.

When I came to, every window in our car was smashed out, and Michael was lying in a sea of glass. Glass was in his hair, his mouth, his eyes—I thought he was dead. His face was covered with blood. I looked over at him and said, "Michael! Michael! Are you all right?" Finally, after a long moment, he opened his eyes and said, "Be cool, Mom; everybody is looking." I thought to myself that anybody who is worried about the way he looks must be all right. He was pinned in the car, but the minute I found him breathing and talking, I opened my door, jumped out, and began directing traffic. You know how we presidents are. I was waving both arms and shouting, "Let's move it. Come on; let's keep moving."

Finally, after the longest delay, the solitary wail of the ambulance came, and they got Michael out of the car. As I walked with him to the ambulance, he reminded me to get his Christmas jacket out of the car. So I ran back to the car to get his coat and my briefcase, my albatross. When we got to the hospital, and they pulled Michael out of the ambulance, I got up to walk out and couldn't move. I had a broken foot, three broken ribs, a concussion and lacerations from head to toe on one side. What was the difference? It was that I was concentrating on that in which I was really wealthy. I don't think I'll ever take for granted again how wealthy Joel and I really are.

I want to leave you with one final word. As college presidents, all of us must learn to juggle a wide variety of duties. And like everyone else, we find ourselves juggling both rubber balls and glass balls. These rubber balls represent work and our place in our profession. Because these work balls bounce, when we drop one, it bounces back and we can begin juggling again. But glass balls don't bounce, do they? When we drop a glass ball, it chops and shatters and sometimes breaks. We also have to make a conscious effort to bend over and pick it up because it will not bounce back. And these glass balls represent family and friends and health. My message then is to be extra careful with these glass balls because they truly are your most precious possessions.

Tonight, I've tried to share some insights about how we can come to know our presidencies for the first time. I've talked about knowing the academy for the first time, about knowing the purpose of education for the first time, and finally about knowing our own personal growth for the first time. The message is a simple one; it's one that we already know. But on this 25th anniversary of the death of one of our greatest presidents, it

seems to me that we have to think in terms of what is the ideal. John F. Kennedy surely represented the best of idealism, of vision, of courage, and of optimism. He captured the sense of spirit over adversity. He epitomized the necessity for all of us to participate in the process of bettering life, not only for ourselves and our families but indeed for all of us.

During this 25th anniversary of Kennedy's death, we cannot surrender to the belief that hell begins on a day when God grants us a clear vision of all we might have achieved, of all the gifts we have wasted, and of all we might have done but did not so. There is, after all, still time to meet the many challenges all of us face in our personal and professional lives.

During these challenging times, changes are occurring in all facets of higher education. From the perspective of the president, this upheaval must be seen as an adventure. Presidents must come back and explore what it is that brought them into the profession in the first place, especially that sense of pride in the academy and the belief that success is more than just measurable outcomes. The challenge to all college presidents is how to ask the right questions to get at what is the heart and the essence of the academy that is loved so well. I'm reminded once more of George Keller's plea for "new management wine in old academic bottles."

Tennyson's inspiring poem "Ulysses" ends with the following lines,

Come, my friends,
'This not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
It may be we shall touch the happy isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Though much is taken, much abides; and though
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are:—
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

Each individual in this room is seeking, and collectively we can define, that perspective of the college president that will allow us to understand more clearly the key role we must play if American higher education is to continue to set the standard by which educational systems throughout the world are measured.

Let me conclude with the following lines of hope and inspiration:

> And I strive to discover how to signal my companions
> [me buddies],
> To say in time a simple word, a password,
> Let us unite, let us hold each other tightly,
> Let us merge our hearts,
> Let us create for earth a brain and a heart,
> Let us give a human meaning to the superhuman struggle.

To the struggle! Thank you.

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